Message

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Subject: Headlines Highlights for RA's Tablet - FRIDAY, May 20, 2016

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Charleston Gazette-Mail

'Do not drink' advised for Vienna water after EPA issues C8 guidance

By David Gutman, Staff Writer
May 20, 2016

Three West Virginia communities are changing their water sources after the federal Environmental Protection Agency released Thursday a new national standard for C8, a chemical that for years contaminated the drinking water of Wood County communities and is linked to cancer, thyroid disease and dangerously high blood pressure in pregnant women.

The EPA's move caused immediate action, as West Virginia regulators on Thursday advised Vienna residents not to drink or cook with their water, based on test results over the past couple of years.

"The Bureau for Public Health is working with the town of Vienna to implement appropriate precautions, which will include a 'Do Not Drink' advisory until additional testing and evaluation takes place," said Dr. Rahul Gupta, commissioner of the state Bureau for Public Health. "The Department of Health and Human Resources and the Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety will assist those affected by the EPA's advisory, and the state will assist in securing installation of new filters.

"Two other public water systems in West Virginia, located in Parkersburg and Martinsburg, were also affected by the new EPA thresholds. They have taken immediate action by using additional water sources to provide water."

All three cities got their water through groundwater sources, or wells, said Walt Ivey, an environmental health official with the DHHR.

Parkersburg and Martinsburg both had additional wells with lower levels of contamination, so they were able to turn off the chemically contaminated sources and residents should see no changes in their water service, Ivey said.

The EPA's health advisory set a level of 70 parts per trillion of C8 in drinking water, saying chemical levels below that standard are "not expected to result in adverse health effects over a lifetime of exposure."

Baseline testing required by the EPA and done in 2014 and 2015 had found chemical levels below a previous provisional health advisory but above the new advisory, Ivey said.

C8, which also is known as perfluorooctanoate acid, or PFOA, was made and used at DuPont Co.'s Washington Works plant, south of Parkersburg, as a processing agent to make Teflon and other nonstick products, oil-resistant paper packaging and stain-resistant textiles.

A similar chemical, known as PFOS — perfluorooctane sulfonate, was found in Martinsburg's water during the baseline testing, Ivey said.

PFOS is found in firefighting foam and often is used at military installations, like Martinsburg's Shepherd Field Air National Guard Base.

The provisional health advisories for the chemicals, set in 2009, were 400 parts per trillion for PFOA and 200 parts per trillion for PFOS.

In 2002, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection had settled on an acceptable level of 150,000 parts per trillion of C8, despite the fact that DuPont's internal guidelines at the time set the acceptable level at 1,000 parts per trillion.

The testing, called the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule and required by the Safe Drinking Water Act, found no evidence of either chemical in Charleston's water system, Ivey said.

Allison Adler, a DHHR spokeswoman, said the National Guard will supply water trucks and bottled water in Vienna.

Officials were working to provide activated carbon treatment to Vienna's water system — but because of the nature of the system, that could be months, Ivey said.

Nothing has changed about any of the three cities' water systems; it's just the EPA's advice on acceptable contamination levels that grew more stringent.

"The water system has been what it is over a long period of time," said Drema Mace, director of the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department. "This is a change in the allowed levels."

Mace said officials are working with Vienna-area restaurants to provide water sources. DuPont and other companies have agreed to a voluntary phase-out of the chemical, but researchers are still concerned about a growing list of possible health effects and about the chemical's presence in consumer products, as well as continued pollution from waste disposal practices.

Environmental groups praised the EPA's move but said it has been far too slow in coming and is still insufficient.

"Although it's a long overdue step in the right direction, the guideline is still too high, as it allows unacceptable accumulation of PFOA to build up in the blood of people drinking it," said Robert Bilott, a longtime lawyer for Parkersburg-area residents who had their water contaminated.

Bilott has been writing to the EPA and to the DEP since 2001 to try to focus their attention on the issue.

He said the most recent data that he's seen show levels of the chemical in several Vienna wells to be over the new guideline.

"At least according to the EPA's new guidance, folks there should be getting different water," Bilott said.

The Environmental Working Group, a national nonprofit that last month wrote to the EPA demanding action, said the new limits are welcome but fall short.

David Andrews and Bill Walker, two officials with the group, cited 2015 research from the Harvard School of Public Health and the University of Massachusetts that showed an "approximate" safe level for PFOA and PFOS is no more than 1 part per trillion, 70 times lower than the EPA's level.

"In addition, the new advisory level is not a legally enforceable limit," Andrews and Walker wrote. "[The] EPA has said it could be 2019 or beyond before the agency even decides whether to start the process of setting a legal limit."

Another group, Keep Your Promises DuPont, called for the EPA to lower its standard to 1 part per trillion and for a legally enforceable standard, as opposed to an advisory one.

"My family, my friends and my neighbors across the mid-Ohio Valley are still drinking water contaminated with C8 at levels exceeding this guideline," said Dr. Paul Brooks, of Keep Your Promises DuPont, specifically citing Vienna. "This is unacceptable and, given this new guideline, our water must be filtered immediately."

Doylestown Intelligencer

EPA releases new safety advisories for chemicals

By Kyle Bagenstose
May 19, 2016

The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday released a long-awaited update to its drinking water advisories for unregulated chemicals perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS).

According to prior testing data of public and private water supplies in Bucks and Montgomery counties, it appears the updated advisories could mean some drinking water in the area is contaminated with the chemicals at a level above what the EPA deems is safe to consume.

Officials from both the Horsham Water and Sewer Authority, Warminster Township Authority and Doylestown Township Municipal Authority in Pennsylvania told this news organization Thursday afternoon that they would shut down public drinking water wells contaminated with chemicals above the new recommended levels.

The chemicals already had contaminated nine public and about 80 private water wells near a trio of current and former military bases in the region: The former Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Horsham Air Guard Station and former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster.

The chemicals are suspected to have originated in firefighting foams used at the bases, and the military already has agreed to spend approximately $19 million to provide replacement water and install filtration systems for public water wells affected by the chemicals, and bottled water and hook-ups to public systems for homes with affected private wells.

Up until Thursday, the military had been gauging its response using short-term, provisional health advisories for the chemicals set by the EPA in 2009: 0.4 parts per billion for PFOA in drinking water, and 0.2 ppb for PFOS.

Thursday's announcement, however, set an advised limit of 0.07 ppb for PFOS and PFOA combined, in order to protect against health effects from a lifetime of exposure. In a worst case scenario, that means drinking water with 0.58 ppb of the chemicals (0.39 ppb PFOA and 0.19 ppb PFOS), which previously was considered safe, now would be more than eight times the recommended limit.

The new levels are a welcome announcement for lawmakers in Pennsylvania and across the country who have been waiting for the EPA's guidance in order to gauge how they should respond to PFOA and PFOS contamination. In Pennsylvania, Governor Tom Wolf, U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, Congressmen Mike Fitzpatrick, Brendan Boyle and Patrick Meehan, and state Reps. Todd Stephens and Bernie O'Neill had written to the EPA and Department of Defense, urging the federal agencies to do more to address the contamination in this state.

Coincidentally, on Thursday, Wolf's office issued a press release stating that the state Department of Environmental Protection would provide free bottled water at the Horsham Community Center for all residents with wells contaminated with perfluorinated compounds at any level. The move originally was intended as a holdover until the EPA released its updated numbers; Wolf spokesman Jeffrey Sheridan said the state will now reassess the necessity of providing bottled water.

"We will evaluate the appropriateness of continuing to provide bottled water after we have had an opportunity to review the new health advisory level," Sheridan wrote in an email.

Local water authorities already are taking action on the new levels.

After the chemicals first were discovered in some local public water supplies by a nationwide EPA testing program in 2013 and 2014, multiple public wells in the area were taken offline.

The Horsham Water and Sewer Authority removed two drinking water wells from its system in the summer of 2014 after PFOS was found at 1 and 0.7 ppb. Data from the testing program shows that three more wells also were contaminated with the chemicals at levels above the EPA's new advisory, with a combined 0.071 ppb, 0.123 ppb, and 0.14 ppb.

In a brief email Thursday, authority manager Tina O'Rourke said only two additional wells are above the 0.07 ppb level as of the most recent testing.

She added that the authority intends to take the wells offline and that existing agreements with the military allow for the authority to take action immediately.

The Warminster Municipal Authority, which previously removed three wells from its supply, also appears to have two more wells contaminated above the new level, with a combined 0.091 ppb and 0.09 ppb.

The Warrington Township Water Department previously removed a trio of wells that combine to form a single water source. Based on the EPA's data showing a combined 0.082 ppb, another well could also be above the new health advisory.

Christian Jones, director of water and sewer in Warrington, said a second sampling of that well showed non-detectable levels of the chemicals. However, he said the authority would take the well, along with a second, offline Thursday as a precaution, and that the authority would be retesting all of its wells.

Although it is not believed to be caused by the military, PFOA was also found in a public well used by the Doylestown Township Municipal Authority in 2015. Located near the Cross Keys shopping center, the well was found to have PFOA as high as 0.21 ppb.

An official from the authority said the well was being shut down on Thursday.

Although unregulated, a growing body of science has established associations between PFOA and PFOS and a range of health effects, including a variety of cancers.

As previously reported by this news organization, hundreds of local residents believe they may have been sickened by drinking water in the area. More than a thousand former military personnel and civilian workers of the bases, along with their family members, share similar concerns in a private Facebook group.

The new, lower numbers may bolster those concerns.

The still-active Horsham Air Guard Station has been struggling with contaminated drinking water since 2014, according to an advisory posted to the base's website. That notice states that on Aug. 22, 2014, base personnel received notice that samples taken from a water supply well on the 238-acre base found PFOS levels of 11.9 parts per billion and PFOA levels of 3.28 ppb — both well above acceptable levels.

Using the updated 0.07 ppb number, personnel were exposed to the chemicals at nearly 217 times what the EPA now deems is safe for consumption in drinking water.

Private well owners also appear to have been exposed at levels several times above what the EPA now deems safe. According to the EPA, private wells in the area reached as high as 3.8 ppb for PFOS and 5 ppb for PFOA. Although the data provided did not include the combined measurements, private wells at those levels would be 54 times and 71 times higher than the EPA's new recommendations, respectively.

Public wells also were affected: In Warminster, PFOS and PFOA levels reached as high as 1.43 ppb combined in one well — or 20 times the new EPA recommendation. Levels in Horsham reached as high as 15 times the EPA's recommendation; in Warrington, 11 times.

The largest study on the health effects of PFOA to date was conducted by the C8 Science Panel. As part of a class-action settlement following PFOA contamination in Ohio and West Virginia, chemical company DuPont agreed to fund an eight-year study that analyzed 69,000 people in the affected area.

By comparing the level of PFOA in participants' blood to their medical histories, a panel of independent epidemiologists found "probable links" to "high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, and pregnancy-induced hypertension." Further research found very high exposure rates also potentially could be associated non-Hodgkin lymphoma, ovarian and prostate cancers.

The threshold for exposure for the study began at 0.05 ppb for PFOA over one year of exposure. Military records show that firefighting foams containing PFOA and PFOS could have been used at the bases in the region as early as 1970.

The U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry recently confirmed it is reviewing three decades of state cancer registry data to see if there are any elevated levels of disease associated with known contaminants in the area. The results of that review are expected in late summer.

Rob Bilott, an Ohio-based attorney who litigated the case against DuPont, told this news organization Thursday he believes the 0.07 ppb number is still too high.

"The new number is a step in the right direction but still far too high, as it will allow unacceptable accumulation in blood of those drinking the water" Bilott said.

The penchant for PFOA and PFOS to accumulate in body tissue is also a concern for Stephens. He has reviewed EPA materials that recommend nursing mothers and children might wish to avoid consumption of any amount of PFOA and PFOS, and says he's waiting to hear back from the agency on whether the new numbers negate that previous advice.

"I'm waiting to hear about guidance for small children," Stephens said Thursday.

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network, a Bristol-based environmental nonprofit that previously investigated contamination involving similar chemicals in Paulsboro, New Jersey, stated in a release that it also believed the 0.07 ppb level is too high. It also urged officials in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to take a proactive approach.

"Delaware Riverkeeper Network calls on the Delaware River watershed states to immediately supply safe drinking water to those affected and to move towards adopting chronic, (safe) drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS," the organization stated in a release Thursday, while also advocating for "complete removal of these toxic compounds from our drinking water."

Joel Beauvais, deputy assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Water, said in a phone interview that the updated advisories reflect a review of available science and are intended to be protective for lifetime exposure to the chemicals for even vulnerable populations, such as nursing mothers and their children.

"These health advisories are scientific documents … the point is to provide the best available information to state and local authorities and drinking water system operators," Beauvais said. "They're calculated to reflect a margin of protection to the most sensitive populations."

Beauvais added that the next step for the chemicals is to be considered for a federal drinking water standard that can be enforced, as is the case with more well-known contaminants such as lead or arsenic. However, he was unable to say how long it might take for that decision to be made.

Until that time, he said, it remains up to state regulators and local water authorities to make decisions about how to respond to contamination of PFOS and PFOA.

"(The advisories) are not enforceable from a federal perspective," Beauvais said. "We are communicating with state drinking water safety programs and encouraging them to engage with these individual systems to make sure they're appropriately following up."

Virginia Cain, a spokeswoman for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, said the agency already had reached out to Doylestown Township regarding the authority's well on Thursday and that it would continue to communicate with local water authorities and the military.

"DEP will continue to support both EPA and US Navy in their efforts, as the federal agencies will maintain the lead oversight of those locations associated with (the bases) in Bucks and Montgomery counties," Cain wrote.

"If these chemicals are found in other drinking water systems above the new (advisories), system operators have been advised by EPA to quickly conduct additional sampling to assess the level, scope, and source of contamination. They should also promptly notify consumers and consult with PA DEP to discuss appropriate next steps to limit exposure," Cain added.

Philadelphia Inquirer

Free water offered to residents near tainted air stations

by Laura McCrystal
May 20, 2016

State officials on Thursday began offering free bottled water to people who live near the former naval air stations in Montgomery and Bucks Counties, which are blamed for contaminating public drinking wells.

The distribution of as many as two cases per day to residents in Warminster, Warrington, and Horsham Townships is a "precautionary action," Gov. Wolf said in a statement announcing the initiative.

It occurred on the same day that federal officials released new guidelines that set a lower bar for the level of acceptable water contamination than what has been used as the standard in Horsham and Warminster. It was not immediately clear if the change would affect efforts to reduce contamination in those communities.

Jeff Sheridan, Wolf's spokesman, said state environmental officials "would evaluate the appropriateness of continuing to provide bottled water" after reviewing the new advisory from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Perfluorinated compounds - which were commonly used in firefighting foams at the former naval air stations in Willow Grove and Warminster - were found in the drinking water there in 2014. Such contaminants have been linked to cancer and reproductive issues.

Local and state officials have worked with the Navy to take the contaminated wells off-line and offer bottled water to nearby residents whose private wells were contaminated.

The scope of health problems, and how many people might want or accept the free water, was unclear.

"We [already] use bottled water in my house and many of my neighbors do as well," said State Rep. Todd Stephens (R., Montgomery), who lives in Horsham and had pressed the governor's office to take action. "Many residents either have whole house filters that they had installed, or rely on bottled water for drinking and cooking."

As more have stepped forward with health concerns, federal and state lawmakers have pressed the Navy and EPA to answer questions about the contamination and health concerns.

"This is a step in the right direction," Reps. Patrick Meehan (R., Pa.) and Brendan Boyle (D., Pa.) said in a joint statement Thursday about the new EPA guidelines.

Levels of contamination in most of Horsham's wells still fall below the new advisory level, according to the township water authority's latest publicly available test results.

The free water was available Thursday afternoon at the Horsham Community Center. Distribution will resume Friday, with pickup available from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Baltimore Sun

Editorial: Hope for the Chesapeake Bay

May 20, 2016

We'll admit there are times that efforts to preserve and protect the health of the Chesapeake Bay feel a bit like mythology's Sisyphus and his rock. Just when you think the job is tough but possible, it all rolls back down the hill — another fish kill, another sewage spill, another protest staged by people opposed to curbing polluted runoff from streets or farm fields.

But then there are also those moments when it's clear that the Chesapeake Bay is not beyond salvation and the efforts to date are not in vain. Such is the all-too-fleeting joy of a "C" on the latest report card from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

That may not sound like a reason to rejoice — many high schoolers with similar grades for 2015 likely faced somewhat less happy conversations with their guardians — but in this context, it actually is a hopeful sign. Recent report cards have hovered in the "D" range. The bay hasn't scored this high in 13 years. Only twice — in 1992 and 2002 — has it fared as well in the 30-year history of the report card, and those were years of drought.

That last bit is rather an important point to make. Sometimes, the traditional measures of water quality in the Chesapeake — levels of water clarity and the presence of excess nutrients or a lack of beneficial submerged aquatic vegetation — are greatly affected by rainfall. Stormy weather can destroy underwater grass beds (witness the devastation wrought by the floods raised by Tropical Storm Agnes in the 1972) and bog down streams with polluted runoff.

But 2015 was fairly typical for precipitation in the watershed, and that has given hope to scientists that what we are witnessing is a sign of recovery — or perhaps an increased resiliency. It also helps that the last two years have revealed steady, if modest, improvement, making 2015 part of a larger pattern — a 45 percent score in 2013, a 50 percent in 2014 and now a 53 percent in 2015.

Not every portion of the Chesapeake Bay is advancing at the same pace, of course, but the pattern of improvement was widespread. Conditions were judged healthiest in Virginia's tidal portion of the bay (nearest the diluting effects of the Atlantic) and worst in urban tributaries like the Baltimore region's own Patapsco and Patuxent rivers. But the differential is not as great as one might imagine.

It's not hard to see where these improved numbers — lower levels of nitrogen, improved benthic activity on the bay floor or increasingly clear water — are coming from. They are born of changing patterns of human behavior. Marylanders have paid to upgrade sewage treatment plants, imposed regulations to reduce polluted runoff, invested more in cover crops and attempted to moderate the worst effects of development.

Often, these changes have been imposed by government — federal, state and local — and they have faced resistance, like the hue and cry over "flush" taxes or "rain" taxes. Yet this report card is hardly the first example of how effective such programs can be — and how the "sacrifices" eventually don't feel like sacrifices at all. Does anyone still miss phosphates in their laundry detergent?

That's not to suggest it's time to break open the champagne and toast the improving fortunes of the nation's largest estuary. There are still too many serious issues facing the region, including those who would love nothing more than to see the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency dismantled and its Total Maximum Daily Load — the "pollution diet" for the Chesapeake Bay that expects ever greater water quality advances in the years ahead — tossed into the ash can.

Still, maybe the achievement deserves a sip or two. Let's take a tip from various public school systems and celebrate an improved performance if not an actual "A" or "B." After all, the punishment handed to Sisyphus was not simply hard labor, it was for him to see that all his efforts were useless. That's clearly not the case with the Chesapeake Bay, and it does no harm to remind ourselves of that hopeful reality once in a while.

Annapolis Capital-Gazette

Editorial: Report card brings good news on the bay

ince when is a C on a report card good news? When it occurs in the evaluation of the Chesapeake Bay by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, which has generally assigned D's during its three decades of doing this annual assessment.

The 53 percent score for 2015 — up from 45 percent in 2013 and 50 percent in 2014 — was one of the three highest since 1986. And those previous high scores – in 1992 and 2002 – were in years in which major droughts kept polluted runoff out of the bay. By contrast, 2015 had typical weather.

That makes the score a sign that the state's efforts to control runoff and clean up sewer plant emissions are having an effect.

Chesapeake Bay Program Director Nick DiPasquale noted that "we've had over two centuries of environmental assaults on this ecosystem" and the bay watershed's population has doubled, to 18 million, since 1950. "It's a fantasy to think we can turn it around in two or three decades."

Nonetheless, as DiPasquale also said, the latest findings indicate progress at "building resiliency back" into the ecosystem. Specifically, the report found that key fish populations such as blue crab and striped bass remain healthy, and there were improvements in water clarity and aquatic grass growth.

It wasn't all encouraging news — phosphorus levels increased from 2014 to 2015, for reasons researchers haven't pinpointed. And with water quality generally improving as you move south on the bay, the Lower Western Shore (including the Magothy, Severn, South, Rhode and West rivers) still rates only a D.

But even here, the report states, "over time, this region is showing a slightly improving trend." That trend can continue — if we stay on course with the environmental measures now built into federal and state policy, and find ways to augment them.

Lancaster Farming

Cooperate With Bay Inspectors, Attorneys Say

By Philip Gruber Staff Writer
May 19, 2016

WINTERSTOWN, Pa. — Having an inspector visit your farm may not be the most comfortable experience, but it need not be confrontational.

“Be as cooperative as you can with these folks,” said Martin Siegel, an attorney at the Stock and Leader law firm.

Siegel and his colleague Sarah Doyle explained the Chesapeake Bay farm inspection process to York County farmers on May 11 at the North Hopewell-Winterstown Volunteer Fire Company.

The inspections are part of Pennsylvania’s reboot of its Chesapeake Bay cleanup, launched in January.

DEP plans to have 10 percent of the farms in the watershed inspected each year.

In most cases, conservation district employees will perform the initial inspections. In counties where conservation districts refuse to take on this role, DEP inspectors will visit the farms.

In the first round, inspectors will check to make sure farms have the required written plans, such as nutrient management, and erosion and sedimentation plans.

Farmers can get out of the first round of inspections by submitting their plans when DEP requests them in writing. That’s the best strategy, Siegel said.

If farmers do not submit the documents, an inspector will call to schedule a time to visit.

“Do not ignore a communication from DEP” and hope it will go away, said Siegel, who spent two decades as an assistant counsel at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, or DEP.

The agency will eventually follow up with you, he said.

Farmers do have the right to ask an inspector to get a warrant before inspecting the farm, but “use common sense,” Siegel said. Farmers may not want to annoy a person who has the power to fine them.

A farmer will likely be dealing with the same inspector for several years. If that person thinks the farmer is a bad actor, the inspection could be expanded beyond the plans, Siegel said.

Inspectors are mainly interested in the plans, but they will write up water quality violations if they observe them, Siegel said.

Farmers should clean up obvious violations — drums of leaking motor oil, manure stored right next to a stream — before a visit, Siegel said.

Pollution problems create more work for inspectors, so they are just as happy to see a farm pass. "They don't get extra credit if they find violations," Siegel said.

When the inspector calls to schedule, farmers should mention any biosecurity requirements for the visit. Inspectors have to comply with those, Siegel said.

DEP tends not to take serious enforcement actions if the business is making a good-faith effort to come into compliance, Siegel said.

DEP has said that being on a waiting list to get a plan written does not get the farm off the hook, but the agency may give a farmer a timeline for finishing the missing plans, Siegel said.

If the farmer gets that extension but later realizes he is likely to miss that deadline, he should call the inspector.

"What DEP hates are surprises," Siegel said.

Siegel and Doyle have heard conflicting things about how many consultants are available to write plans, but the key is "don't leave it to the last minute," Siegel said.

The expanded slate of inspections is new territory for DEP.

Going after farmers has been uncomfortable for the agency because that often prompts calls from politicians, Siegel said.

DEP has also lost hundreds of inspector positions over the past decade, so farm visits have been minimal in recent years, he said.

Siegel remembered only one enforcement action against a farmer in his two decades at DEP. In that case, a farmer complained about his brother-in-law's farm upstream.

Generally, Siegel said, there's no need to have a lawyer on hand for an initial inspection.

If there is a problem during the visit or the inspector starts talking about entering into an agreement or order, that is the time to seek legal advice, he said.

Consent orders and similar documents are usually straightforward, but penalties and late fees are usually negotiable. "A lot of people don't know that," Siegel said.

Farms with a history of missed deadlines and pollution problems will tend to get higher penalties than first-time offenders.

"You do not want to get a history of violations," Siegel said.

Farmers must have an ag erosion and sedimentation plan if they disturb more than 5,000 square feet of soil, Doyle said.

That includes plowed fields and animal heavy use areas. "Even if you're a no-till operation, that's still considered earth disturbance," Doyle said.

Landowners and tenants are both responsible for having an E&S plan, Doyle said.

This plan does not need to be filed with the state or county. "It just has to be available for review upon inspection," she said.

E&S plans must be written by someone with technical expertise, such as a consultant from a conservation district, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service or the private sector, Doyle said.

Nutrient management plans are required for large animal operations. They must be written by a specialist, approved by the conservation district and reviewed every three years, Doyle said.

Concentrated animal feeding operations must have both an E&S and nutrient management plan, plus a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit and sometimes other paperwork, she said.

Manure management plans are needed for smaller operations that have livestock or spread manure. "I'm talking one pony. I'm talking one 4-H project," Doyle said.

Farmers can write these plans themselves so long as they include all the required details, such as manure application rates, setbacks from streams and animal concentration, Doyle said.

Although DEP is mostly focused on seeing that farms have plans written, "you also need to implement the plans," Siegel said.

Implementation could be the subject of future inspections, he said.

The EPA Blog

Science Guides Public Health Protection for Drinking Water

By Joel Beauvais
May 19, 2016

As a country, we've come a long way toward providing clean air, water, and land – essential resources that support healthy, productive lives. But we have more work to do to make sure that every American has access to safe drinking water.

That's why EPA launched a concerted engagement effort with key partners and stakeholders – including state, tribal and local governments, drinking water utilities, and public health, environmental and community stakeholders – to develop and implement a national action plan to address critical drinking water challenges and opportunities.

As always, our work to protect public health and the environment must consistently be built on a foundation of sound science and data. When it comes to drinking water, scientific information helps us identify pollutants of concern – including new or emerging contaminants – assess potential health impacts, and understand the steps needed to address them.

Today, based on the latest science on two chemical contaminants called PFOA and PFOS, EPA released drinking water health advisories to provide the most up-to-date information on the health risks of these

chemicals. These advisories will help local water systems and state, tribal and local officials take the appropriate steps to address PFOA and PFOS if needed.

For many years, PFOA and PFOS were widely used in carpets, clothing, furniture fabrics, food packaging, and other materials to make them more resistant to water, grease, and stains. PFOA and PFOS were also used for firefighting at airfields and in a number of industrial processes. Between 2000 and 2002, PFOS was voluntarily phased out of production in the U.S. by its primary manufacturer. And EPA asked eight major companies to commit to eliminate their production and use of PFOA by the end of 2015 and they have indicated that they have met their commitments. While there are some limited ongoing uses of these chemicals, in recent years, blood testing data has shown that exposures are declining across the country.

For most people, their source of exposure to PFOA and PFOS has come through food and consumer products. But drinking water can be an additional source of exposure in the small percentage of communities where these chemicals have contaminated water supplies. This is typically a localized issue associated with a specific facility – for example, in communities where a manufacturing plant or airfield made or used these chemicals.

EPA's assessment indicates that drinking water with individual or combined concentrations of PFOA and PFOS below 70 parts per trillion is not expected to result in adverse health effects over a lifetime of exposure. These levels reflect a margin of protection, including for the most sensitive populations.

If these chemicals are found in drinking water systems above these levels, system operators should quickly conduct additional sampling to assess the level, scope, and source of contamination. They should also promptly notify consumers and consult with their state drinking water agency to discuss appropriate next steps. Public notification is especially important for pregnant or nursing women because of the impact these chemicals can have on the development of fetuses and breastfed or formula-fed infants. There are a number of options available to water systems to lower concentrations of these chemicals in the drinking water supply.

EPA will continue sharing the latest science and information so that state and local officials can make informed decisions and take actions to protect public health. This is an important part of our broader effort to support states and public water systems as we work together to strengthen the safety of America's drinking water.

For more information on the health advisories for PFOA and PFOS, visit the webpage.

EPA Mid-Atlantic Healthy Waters Blog

Why I Love Wetlands

By Carol Petrow
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May is American Wetlands Month which makes it a perfect time to talk about a passion of mine. Wetlands are the vital link between land and water. What is not to love about them?

EPA proclaims that "Wetlands are natural wonderlands of great value." My sentiments exactly! They provide important benefits to people and the environment by regulating water levels within watersheds, reducing flood

and storm damage, improving water quality, providing important fish and wildlife habitat, and supporting educational and recreational activities.

To protect and restore our nation's wetlands, EPA partners with other federal, state, local and tribal governments using regulatory authority as well as non-regulatory approaches, such as developing voluntary restoration and protection programs for wetlands.

With a membership consisting of federal and state regulatory personnel and scientists, the Mid-Atlantic Wetland Workgroup Exit provides a forum for exchanging ideas, information, and strategies to facilitate the development and implementation of state wetlands monitoring and assessment programs that support restoration and protection. At EPA, we've found over the years that, effective approaches to wetland protection engage individuals and communities. Volunteer monitoring programs empower citizens to become more active stewards of wetlands in their communities.

Like people, wetlands come in all different types and sizes. Some are wet all the time, while others sometimes appear dry. Some have trees and shrubs, some only grasses or mud. They can be large or small. Nearly every county and climatic zone in the country has wetlands – so there are lots of wetlands to love, and you are never far from one of these natural wonderlands. To find a wetland near you, consult your local parks department, state natural resource agency or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

During May and throughout the year, Learn! Explore! And Take Action to learn about and protect our wetland gems.

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